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09/542,783	04/04/2000	John Whitman	4294US(98-1208)	6870
7590 05/01/2007			EXAMINER	
Brick G Power			KEBEDE, BROOK	
Trask Britt & Rossa			ART UNIT	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/542,783

Applicant(s)

WHITMAN ET AL.

Examiner

Brook Kebede

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 February 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-87 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 18-87 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. **Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.**

Claim 1 recites the limitation “the material forming a layer of non-uniform thickness wit an upper surface that is substantially planar” in lines 8-9. However, the recited limitation has no for “*the material forming a layer of non-uniform thickness wit an upper surface that is substantially planar*” support in the drawings as well as in the specification as originally filed.

Therefore, the claim contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claims 2-17 also rejected as being directly or indirectly dependent of the rejected independent base claim.

3. **Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.**

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Claim 1 recites the limitation “the material forming a layer of non-uniform thickness with an upper surface that is substantially planar” in lines 8-9.

However, the aforementioned limitation is self contradictory for the following reasons:

On one hand, claim 1 recites the upper surface of the material layer being substantially “planar.”

On the other hand, claim 1 also recites the upper surface of the material layer having non-uniform thickness.

If the upper surface of the material layer has non-uniform thickness, then the surface is non-planar also. If the surface has planar upper surface, then the thickness of the upper surface must be planar.

Therefore, the claim is indefinite in its meaning and scope because it contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claims 2-17 also rejected as being directly or indirectly dependent of the rejected independent base claim.

In light of the rejection 35 U.S.C. § 112 second Paragraph that set forth herein above, the following 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection is based on prior art which reads on the interpretation the claim language of the instant application as best as understood by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. **Claims 1-9, 11, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kikuchi et al. (US/6,278,153) in view of Yoshihara (US/6,117,486).**

Re claims 1 and 3-7, Kikuchi et al. disclose a method for disposing a material on a semiconductor device structure comprising: providing a semiconductor device structure (see Fig. 6D) including a surface (23 24 25 26) and at least one recess (23a) formed in the surface; disposing the material (20) on at least a portion of the surface (23 24 25 26) so as to substantially fill at least one recess (23a) and the material (20) covering the surface having a thickness less than a depth of said at least one recess (23a) without subsequently removing the material (20) from the surface, the material (20) having a non-uniform thickness (i.e., the material layer 20 has non-uniform thickness that is thicker in the recess region 23a and thinner

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outsider of the recess) and the material (20) being appear substantially planar on the upper surface (23 24 25 26) (see Figs. 6A-6D; 10A-10E and 13A-13E;).

However, Kikuchi et al. do not specifically disclose with certainty the upper surface portion of the material within the recess substantially planar.

Yoshihara discloses applying the material to the surface of the semiconductor device structure spinning the semiconductor device structure both decreasing rate of spinning and while allowing the material to cure gradually increasing the rate of spinning; exposing the material to a soft balling temperature; spinning rate of 1000 and 100 rpm (see Figs. 10 and Col. 13, lines 25-44). As Yoshihara discloses the method provided forming of resist film on the semiconductor wafer at predetermined and uniform thickness.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant(s) claimed invention was made to have provided Kikuchi et al. reference with spinning the semiconductor device structure both decreasing rate of spinning and while allowing the material to cure gradually increasing the rate of spinning as taught by Yoshihara because the method would have provided to form a resist film on the semiconductor wafer at predetermined and uniform thickness (i.e., it is analogous to substantially planar).

Re claim 2, as applied to claim 1 above, Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including disposing the material so as to substantially fill the at least one recess without substantially covering said surface (see Figs. 6A-6D; 10A-10E and 13A-13E;).

Re claim 8, as applied to claim 1 above, Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including upon exposing the material disposed over an entirety of said semiconductor device structure to an etchant, the material covering said surface

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is substantially removed therefrom, while the material located in said at least one recess substantially fills said at least one recess (see Figs. 6A-6D; 10A-10E and 13A-13E).

Re claim 9, as applied to claim 1 above, Kikuchi et al. Yoshihara in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation wherein said providing said semiconductor device structure comprises providing a stacked capacitor structure with said at least one recess comprising at least one container formed in an insulator layer of said stacked capacitor structure, said surface and said at least one container being lined with a conductive material (see Figs. 6A-6D; 10A-10E; 13A-13E)

Re claim 11 as applied to claim 1 above, Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation wherein said disposing the material comprises disposing a mask material over said semiconductor device structure (see Fig. 6A-6D; 10A-10E; 13A-13E).

Re claims 16 and 17, as applied to claim 1 above, Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation providing a semiconductor device structure having a surface with at least one dual damascene trench recessed therein and a layer of conductive material, with a non-planar surface disposed in said at least one dual damascene trench add at least partially covering said surface and disposing a stress buffer over said layer of conductive material, said stress buffer having a substantially planar surface without removing material thereof following said disposing (see Figs. 14A-14D).

6. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kikuchi et al. (US/6,278,153) and Yoshihara (US/6,117,486), as applied in Paragraph 3 above, and further in view of Lin et al. (US/6,046,083).

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Re claim 10, as applied to claim 9 above, Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including forming of stacked capacitor structure having conductive layer. Although it is well-known in the art Kikuchi et al. do not disclose doped HSG.

Lin et al. disclose providing said semiconductor device structure having a stacked capacitor structure with the surface and at least one container being lined, with doped hemispherical grain polysilicon (see Figs. 7 and 8).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant(s) claimed invention was made to have provided Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara in reference with doped HSG as taught by Lin et al. because the device performance would have been enhanced (see Lin et al. Col. 1, lines 59-67 through Col. 2, lines 1-14).

7. Claims 12-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kikuchi et al. (US/6,278,153), and Yoshihara (US/6,117,486), as applied in Paragraph 3 above, and further in view of Park et al. (US/6,326,282).

Re claim 12, as applied to claim 1 above, Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation except providing a shallow trench isolation structure with at least one recess comprising at least one trench formed in a surface of the shallow trench isolation structure.

Park et al. disclose forming of a shallow trench isolation structure with at least one recess comprising at least one trench formed in a surface of the shallow trench isolation structure in order to form an isolation region between the device elements (see Figs. 2B-2E).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant(s) claimed invention was made to have provided Kikuchi et al. and Yoshihara reference with shallow trench isolation structure as taught by Park et al. because the shallow

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trench isolation structure would have provided isolation region between device elements in the substrate.

Re claim 13, as applied to claim 12 above, Kikuchi et al., Yoshihara and Park et al. in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation wherein said disposing the material comprises disposing a mask material over said shallow trench isolation structure (see Park et al. Figs. 2B-2E).

Re claim 14, as applied to claim 12 above, both Kikuchi et al., Yoshihara and Park et al. in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation wherein said providing said shallow trench isolation structure comprises providing said shallow trench isolation structure with an insulator layer substantially filling said at least one trench and covering said surface see Park et al. Figs. 2B-2E).

Re claim 15, as applied to claim 14 above, both Kikuchi et al., Yoshihara and Park et al. in combination disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation wherein said disposing the material comprises disposing a stress buffer over said insulator layer, said stress buffer having a substantially planar surface without removing material thereof following said disposing see Park et al. Figs. 2B-2E).

Response to Arguments

8. Applicants' arguments with respect to claims 1-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection that was necessitated by the amendment filed on February 5, 2007 as applied in Paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

Since applicants' arguments based on the claim subject matter that is incorporated via through February 5, 2007 amendment, the argument is moot in view of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 first and second Paragraph that set forth in Paragraphs 2 and 3 above. However, the

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limitation of claim 1 is interpreted in consistent with Fig. 2 of the instant application that the material layer 18, having non-uniform thickness in consistent with being thicker in the recess and being thinner in the outsider the recess. In this regard, Fig. 16D of the Kikuchi et al. '153 is analogous to the limitations of claim 1.

Therefore, the combination of Kikuchi et al. '153 and Yoshihara '486 disclose all the claimed limitations of claim 1. Hence, the *prima facie* case of obviousness has been met and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is deemed proper.

Conclusion

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

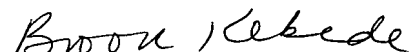
Correspondence

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brook Kebede whose telephone number is (571) 272-1862. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-5 Monday to Friday.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Matthew S. Smith can be reached on (571) 272-1907. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Brook Kebede
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2823

BK
April 28, 2007